

PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Effective Date: 2/16/96

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of planning, monitoring and evaluation functions within DSCYF is to ensure that programs undertaken by the Department are mission-driven, outcome-focused, effective, and efficient.

Programs and new initiatives should be the result of planning activities which provide a clear statement of program goals and objectives, phased program implementation steps, and desired outcomes and performance measures.

Program implementation shall be monitored to ascertain the degree to which target populations are being reached, whether the delivery of services is consistent with the program planning documents, and what resources are being or have been used in service delivery.

Program or outcome evaluation assesses the extent to which planned activities produce the desired outcome among a target population.

II. POLICY

DSCYF is accountable to the State of Delaware Legislature and to the citizens of the State of Delaware for self-correcting management and the continuous improvement of services integration for the programs for which the Department has been given responsibility. Through planning, monitoring, and evaluation and by tracking its efforts on identified performance measures, DSCYF makes itself publicly accountable for its efforts and activities.

III. DEFINITIONS

1. Program Planning: The conscious process through which program goals and objectives are articulated, critical success factors are identified, the steps and sequences for achieving targeted goals are

specified, and desired outcomes and performance measures are clearly stated.

2. **Program Monitoring:** Program monitoring is directed at three key questions: (1) the extent to which a program is reaching the appropriate target population; (2) whether or not the delivery of services is consistent with the program design specifications; and (3) what resources are being or have been expended in the conduct of the program.

3. **Program Evaluation:** A systematic analysis of the impact of the delivery of services with regard to targeted populations and outcomes to determine if the goals of a program are realized.

4. **Benchmark Standards:** Benchmark standards are the “best practice” performance measures for any given process and activity. Benchmark standards will be used by the Department as yardsticks against which to evaluate its performance measurements.

5. **Performance Measures:** Performance measures are selected program indicators which are used to track the effectiveness of service delivery and administrative functions for review and evaluation by DSCYF.

6. **The Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit:** The staff support unit within the Division of Management Services charged with assisting the Department in its efforts to improve its ability to become a self-correcting organization through planning, benchmarking, monitoring and evaluation efforts.

IV. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Division Directors

Division Directors are responsible for establishing Division evaluation priorities.

Division Directors, and their staffs, will work with the staff of the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit in developing evaluation plans, designs, schedules, and final evaluation reports. The

respective roles of the Division participants and the PM&E staff in each evaluation project will be documented on the Evaluation Role / Responsibility Summary Form (attached).

At the second quarter performance review with the Cabinet Secretary, each Division Director will:

- a. Report on the current year's evaluation efforts; and
- b. Communicate Division evaluation priorities for the coming year.

The evaluation review should include a summary of the results of each completed evaluation project, purposes served and value-added. The discussion of evaluation priorities should also describe expected value-added benefits.

2. Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit

All Departmental evaluation efforts shall be brought to the attention of the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit so that there is a centralized place for information about evaluation activities within the Department. Use the attached form, Notification of Evaluation, to notify the PM&E Unit of any existing or planned evaluation activities. The Notification of Evaluation Form is a template and can be found on the S:drive (as S:\evalform.dot). **NOTE:** Save the completed form under another file name.

Departmental staff are encouraged to contact the unit with any questions they may have about the design or conduct of an evaluation effort and, in particular, to seek the unit's assistance in determining the feasibility of effectively evaluating Departmental programs.

The role of the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit is to provide a range of support services including:

- a. reviewing and providing suggestions for monitoring and evaluation plans of Departmental units;

- b. assisting with the development of monitoring and evaluation plans;
- c. conducting selected Departmental monitoring and evaluation efforts.

What role the unit will play in each activity will be determined through consultation between the program unit, Division management, and members of the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit. The roles of all participants (either Departmental or contract) in each evaluation effort, including the role of the PM&E staff, will be documented on the Evaluation Role / Responsibility Summary Form (attached). This form will be completed within 30 days of the completion of a Notification of Evaluation Form.

The PM&E Unit is charged with the responsibility for reviewing all Departmentally prepared or contracted evaluation reports before they are forwarded to the Cabinet Secretary.

V. EVALUATION CRITERIA/STANDARDS

The following evaluation criteria/standards serve as guidelines to DSCYF in the design and implementation of Departmental program evaluations.

1. Selection of Programs for Evaluation
 - a. The Departmental mission and strategic planning needs will drive the prioritization of programs selected for evaluation. Resources to complete significant evaluations will be allocated in line with Departmental processes for selecting budget initiatives.
 - b. In the selection of evaluation projects, there should be a bias toward evaluating what is currently at stake, where there are decisions that need to be made and approved by others. Evaluations should be decision focused. For instance, all pilot programs require an evaluation.

c. Programs identified as evaluation priorities will receive an evaluation feasibility assessment which includes: (1) review of documents describing the program; (2) interviews with program managers and staff to determine how the program is actually working; (3) development of a program flow chart; (4) preparation of key questions to be addressed; and (5) an assessment of whether an evaluation will be able to provide the information being sought.

d. Evaluations should be productive and provide useful information -- results should justify dollar and effort expenditures.

2. Design of Evaluations

Internal and external stakeholders should be involved in preparing evaluation plans and designs which specify and clearly describe the evaluation sample, measurements, data collection, and statistical techniques so that key stakeholders understand how the evaluation data will be obtained and analyzed.

3. Respect for Client/Stakeholder Concerns

Data collection procedures shall respect the confidentiality, rights and dignity of DSCYF clients, staff and service providers. Stakeholder interests and/or alternative hypotheses about program impact will be integrated into the evaluation effort as much as practicable.

4. Conduct of Evaluations

Evaluations should be designed to minimize disruption of client services and other organizational operations.

Data should be collected to assure reliability and accuracy so that evaluation results can be considered valid and accepted with confidence.

5. Preparation, Dissemination and Use of Evaluation Results/Reports

Evaluation reports should be easy to read, objective, well organized, with results, assumptions, interpretations, strengths and weaknesses, limitations and recommendations clearly identified.

Reports should be prepared and disseminated in a timely manner to relevant stakeholders so as to encourage support and follow-through.

VI. RATIONALE AND PROCESS FOR DETERMINING DEPARTMENTAL EVALUATION PRIORITIES

Guiding principles for determining Departmental evaluation priorities include:

1. Departmental and Division missions
2. Departmental and Division strategic plans

There should be a bias toward evaluating what is currently at stake, where there are decisions that need to be made and approved by others. Evaluations should be decision focused.

As each Division works to clarify its mission and moves to improve its mission-driven programming, staff and management will need evaluation information to determine what programs are producing the desired outcomes and which programs need revision or replacement.

Each Division will identify its evaluation priorities. These may encompass major program performance, the potential for new programs, evaluation of long-term and well-established programs, needs assessments, or any other issue the Division views as core to its mission and strategic planning needs. Within each Division, management will want to consider their evaluation needs through a series of filters that include mission, cost, staff effort, stakeholder concerns, service integration, program benefit, and evaluation feasibility.

The timeline for developing each Division's evaluation priorities should correspond with the strategic planning and new initiative/budget development process. Consideration of evaluation

needs within the context of strategic planning is an on-going and never ending process.

Budget initiatives may be submitted for evaluation projects which may require additional resources. These initiatives will be considered in the budget preparation process.

EVALUATION ROLE / RESPONSIBILITIES SUMMARY FORM

The following list summarizes the roles / responsibilities of the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (PM&E) and the other Division / Contractor participants in a DSCYF evaluation project. This form will be completed within 30 days of the completion of a Notification of Evaluation Form.

PM&E Responsibilities Date

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Division/Contractor Responsibilities Date

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

The PM&E Unit is required to review all Departmentally prepared or contracted evaluation reports before they are forwarded to the Cabinet Secretary.

Manager, PM&E

Date

Evaluation Project Manager

Date